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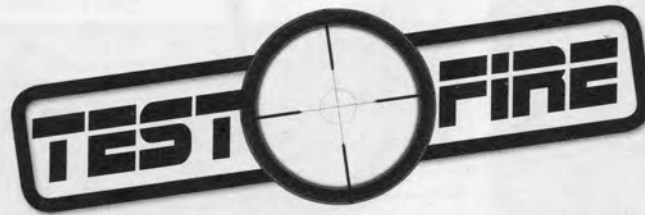


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# MAGNUM RESEARCH'S FABULOUS BFR

BY Max Prasac



**T**his is the third time that I have tested this particular revolver configuration – well in almost the same configuration. That first BFR in .500 JRH had a 6½-inch barrel, while the subsequent models are equipped with a 5½-inch tube. Why? It's that good, seriously.

The reason to own a Magnum Research BFR (Big Frame Revolver) in .500 JRH is to stalk up close to and put down large animals that can hurt you. This revolver is a thoroughbred. Not meant for plinking, goofing off or target shooting, although it will perform those

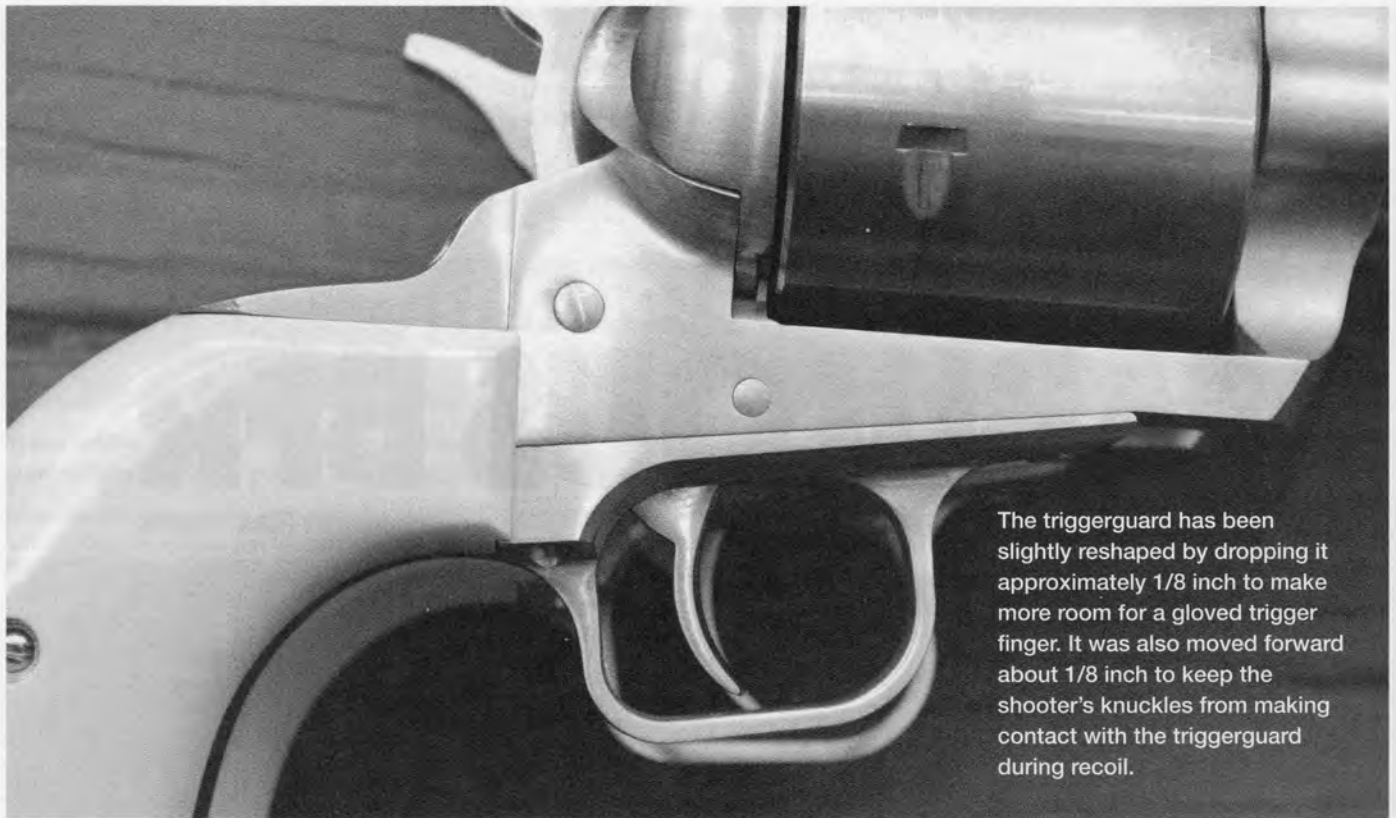
tasks admirably, particularly when loaded down. When loaded to spec, this is one mean, uncompromising big-game hunting revolver. Period.

I have more expensive production revolvers — a lot more expensive, that will not outshoot the BFR. As I have said before, BFR should stand for “Bang For the Revenue,” as you may be really hard pressed to find a revolver that exhibits the quality and performance of Minnesota's finest revolver manufacturer.

Constructed entirely of 17-4PH stainless steel, the BFR looks like Ruger's single-action Super Blackhawk, albeit beefier in key areas like the bottom por-

tion of the frame, as well as the topstrap, making the BFR among the strongest revolvers ever made. The extra bulk adds weight, but they are welcome ounces that help tame the considerable recoil generated by top-end loads.

The counter-bored, unfluted five-shot cylinder features a free-wheeling pawl, making loading and unloading a snap. It is equipped with a transfer-bar safety system allowing for safe loaded carry in the field. The premium barrel features a fast 1:15-inch twist rate. The frame comes pre-drilled and tapped for a scope base and rings, and Magnum Research is kind enough to supply a good Weaver-



The triggerguard has been slightly reshaped by dropping it approximately 1/8 inch to make more room for a gloved trigger finger. It was also moved forward about 1/8 inch to keep the shooter's knuckles from making contact with the triggerguard during recoil.

style scope base if you so choose to outfit yours with an optic.

There have been some subtle, yet significant, BFR refinements over the years and this latest version is the best one ever. Previous iterations utilized a number of Ruger-sourced internal parts, but those days are behind Magnum Research as they are now producing all BFR parts locally. The triggerguard has been lowered and moved forward approximately 1/8 inch to allow for more room for a gloved trigger finger, and the increase in space between the shooter's middle knuckle and the triggerguard dur-

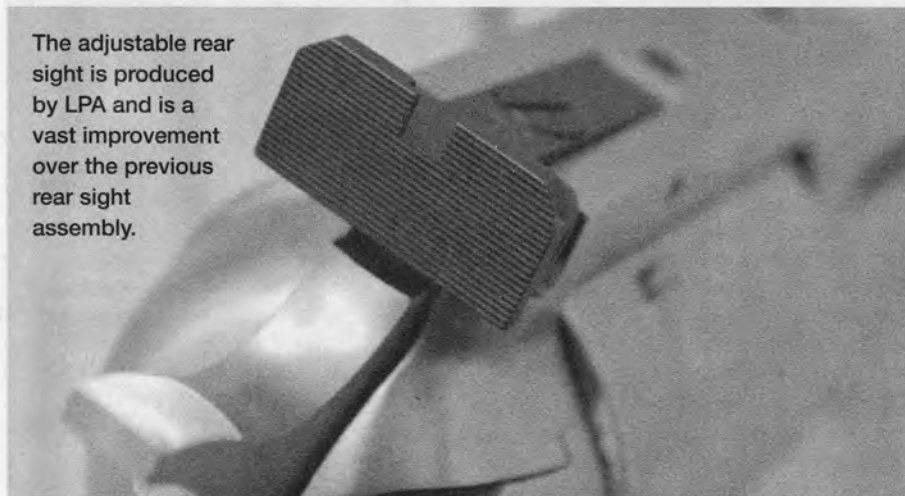
ing recoil makes for a friendlier shooting experience. You may also notice the new hammer profile, which allows easier gloved manipulation and decreases the chances of your glove getting pinched between the hammer spur and the frame. Note that these are Minnesota cold-weather concessions!

My only criticism back during my first test was rather subjective. I stated the following in that first write-up: "The grip frame is standard Ruger plow-handle. I am a self-professed Bisley man. That said, the Bisley grip frame is not for everyone, and if you ask

10 handgunners their preference they will likely come down on one of the two sides evenly. So, it's not a flaw, just a preference. The supplied rubber grips did a fine job at limiting discomfort with the top-end loads, and give the BFR a rather utilitarian look." And with that, let me introduce you to the new "Bisley" grip frame by Magnum Research. Like Ruger's iteration of the Bisley, the Magnum Research version is also an interpretation. Like Ruger's, the BFR's is a more vertical profile that transfers recoil to the shooter much more like a double-action revolver, pushing back into the web of the hand. This gives the shooter much greater control. Unlike Ruger's Bisley, the BFR has substantial room between your middle knuckle and the back of the triggerguard. I think that this grip will be a big hit.

Let's briefly talk about the caliber this BFR is chambered for. The .500 JRH was the brainchild of Jack R. Huntington (JRH Advanced Gunsmithing, 775-355-6898), a gunsmith out of northern Nevada. Jack wanted a full-power, .50-caliber cartridge that would fit in a standard-frame revolver like the Freedom Arms Model 83, with a maximum case length of 1.4 inches. He turned a dummy in his lathe in 1993 and the .500 JRH became a real live, commercially loaded reality in 2004

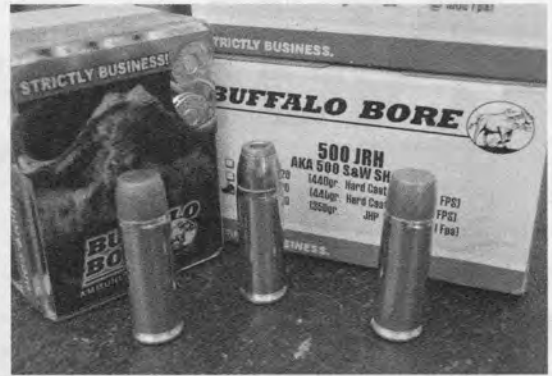
The adjustable rear sight is produced by LPA and is a vast improvement over the previous rear sight assembly.



ACCURACY TABLE

Load Weight (grains)	Advertised Velocity (fps)	Group 25 yards	Group 50 yards
Buffalo Bore JHP 350	1,500	.874"	2.056"
Buffalo Bore WFN 440	975	1"	1.821"
Buffalo Bore WFN 440	1,325	.508"	.714"

Test firing was indoors with a sandbag rest. Five-shot groups.



Above Right: Buffalo Bore Ammunition supplied us with three .500 JRH loads: a 350-grain JHP at 1,500 fps, and two 440-grain hardcast loads at 975 fps and 1,325 fps.

when Starline produced the brass and Buffalo Bore created the first commercial loads for it, followed by the Grizzly Cartridge Company.

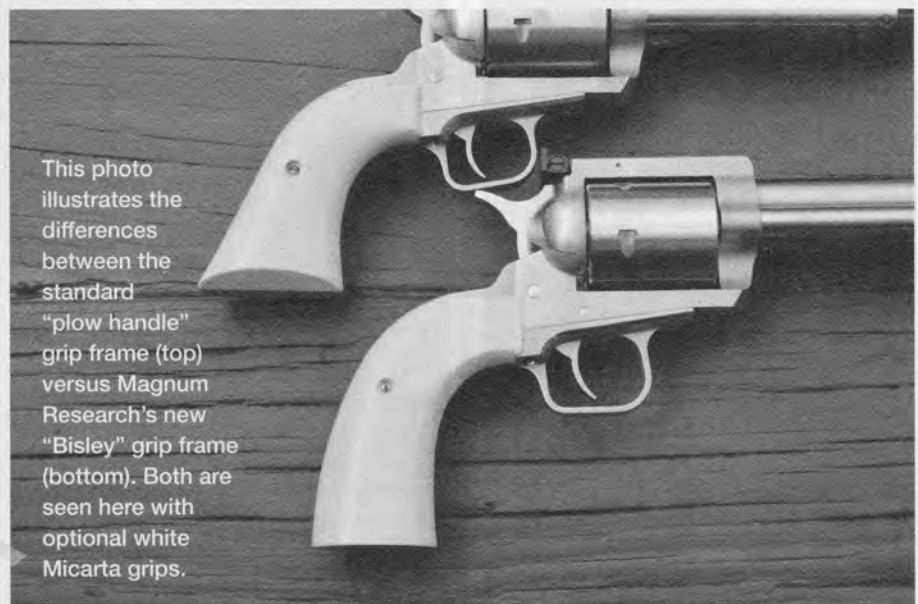
We fitted our BFR with an Ultradot 4 ([www.ultradotwest.com](http://www.ultradotwest.com)) red-dot sight on the supplied rings (from Ultradot) and base to aid in our testing. Buffalo Bore Ammunition ([www.buffalobore.com](http://www.buffalobore.com)) provided us with a number of loads to try.

Let's talk accuracy. Shooting off of a sandbag rest, the best group we measured was less than 1 inch at 50 yards. We have rifles that don't shoot that well! Recoil is brisk but manageable with all of the loads tested, however, the top 440-grain load from Buffalo Bore borders on unpleasant, but even that notion is quickly forgotten when it regularly clusters multiple shots in small groups. The accuracy exhibited by this load is staggering and any load that will group under 1 inch at 50 yards is in a word, notable. This is a load that you would want when facing something large, furry and angry bearing down on you. However, I can't wait to perform some load development specifically for this revolver.

I have big plans for this gun. Initially, I will drag it down to Hondo, Texas, to Action Outdoor Adventures for some terminal ballistic exercises on water buffalo, and then maybe next year it will be off to the Dark Continent for Cape buffalo. The .500 JRH BFR is accurate, reliable and even attractive, if that last point is important to you. For me there is an undeniable beauty in the functionality of Magnum Research's big revolvers, a functionality that was designed into these handguns from the outset. If you want a no-compromise big-game hunting revolver, look no further than the BFR in .500 JRH.



The new hammer profile (right) is said to work better with gloved hands, as the glove will be less likely to get pinched by the hammer. More cold-weather concessions by Magnum Research!



This photo illustrates the differences between the standard "plow handle" grip frame (top) versus Magnum Research's new "Bisley" grip frame (bottom). Both are seen here with optional white Micarta grips.